

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1-16. (Canceled)

17. (Previously Presented) A bi-directional tensioning device for tensioning an anchoring line and a threadable line comprising:

- i) two spaced parallel plate members;
- ii) a rotatable drive element mounted between the plate members;
- iii) at least one ratchet wheel integrally connected to the rotatable drive element,

wherein the ratchet wheel includes directionally oriented notches;

- iv) a pivot lever mounted on the drive element;
- v) a drive part attached to the pivot lever;
- vi) a blocking mechanism operationally coupled to the plate members, wherein the

blocking mechanism includes a blocking pawl, a support surface interconnecting the plate members, and a first spring mounted on the support surface, wherein the first spring braces the blocking pawl into blocking engagement with the ratchet wheel;

vii) a first and second anchoring line attachment means interconnecting the parallel plate members at remote ends of the device, wherein the anchor line may be removeably attached to either anchoring line attachment means; and

viii) a first and second guide means serving to aid in winding the threadable line, the first guide means interconnects the two parallel plates and is spaced next to the support surface of the blocking mechanism and guides the threadable line over the blocking mechanism, the second guide means includes a support surface interconnecting the parallel plate members and is spaced between the second anchoring line attachment means and the rotatable drive element.

18. (Original) A bi-directional tensioning device as described in claim 17, wherein the blocking pawl is of slider-like construction.

19-23. (Canceled)

24. (Previously Presented) A bi-directional tensioning device as described in claim 17, wherein a cam of each directionally oriented notch on the ratchet wheel is remote from the first end of the device.

25. (Previously Presented) A bi-directional tensioning device as described in claim 17, wherein a cam of each directionally oriented notch on the ratchet wheel is remote from the second end of the device.

26. (Previously Presented) A bi-directional tensioning device as described in claim 17, wherein the drive part is mounted slidably counter to the action of a second spring.

27. (Previously Presented) A bi-directional tensioning device as described in claim 26, wherein the second spring is a torsion spring.

28. (Previously Presented) A bi-directional tensioning device as described in claim 17, wherein the drive part has been lengthened in order to accommodate winding a greater length of the threadable line.

29. (Previously Presented) A bi-directional tensioning device as described in claim 17, wherein the drive part is provided with a handle by means of which the drive part may be actuated.

30. (Previously Presented) A bi-directional tensioning device as described in claim 17, wherein the drive part includes a control cam serving to transfer the blocking mechanism associated with the ratchet wheel into an inoperative position.

31. (Canceled)

32. (Currently Amended) A method for partially releasing a threadable line from a tensioning device, the tensioning device including:

a ratchet wheel serving to wind the threadable line, the ratchet wheel including directionally oriented notches,

a drive part in engagement with a first directionally oriented notch of the ratchet wheel, the drive part serving to turn the ratchet wheel in a second direction by entraining the first notch only when the drive part is moved along a distance in the second direction, wherein the drive part blocks movement of the ratchet wheel in the first direction when the drive part is maintained at a point along the distance, the drive part including a control cam, and

a blocking mechanism in blocking engagement with a second directionally oriented notch of the ratchet wheel, the blocking mechanism serving to block movement of the ratchet wheel in the first direction, and the blocking mechanism including a handle portion, the control cam of the drive part configured to transfer the blocking mechanism from an operative position to an inoperative position, the method comprising:

positioning the control cam so that the blocking mechanism is in an operative position;

positioning and maintaining the drive part at a point along the distance such that the driver part is capable of moving in the first direction;

pulling the handle portion of the blocking mechanism to remove the blocking mechanism from blocking engagement with the second notch of the ratchet wheel;

moving the drive part in the first direction so as to enable the ratchet wheel to turn in the first direction, thereby moving the second notch past the blocking mechanism; and

releasing the handle portion of the blocking mechanism to enable the blocking mechanism to return to blocking engagement with a third directionally oriented notch of the ratchet wheel.

33. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 32, further comprising:

i) pulling a handle on the drive part to disengage the drive part from the first directionally oriented notch of the ratchet wheel;

ii) moving the drive part in the second direction past at least the first ~~direct~~ directionally oriented notch; and

iii) releasing the handle on the drive part to engage the drive part with a fourth directionally oriented notch.

34. (Currently Amended) A bi-directional tensioning device for tensioning an anchoring line and a threadable line comprising:

- i) two spaced parallel plate members;
- ii) a rotatable drive element mounted between the plate members;
- iii) at least one ratchet wheel integrally connected to the rotatable drive element,

wherein the ratchet wheel includes directionally oriented notches;

iv) a pivot lever mounted on the drive element, the pivot lever including a control cam;

v) a drive pawl ~~pivotably~~ slidably attached to the pivot lever, the drive pawl including a handle;

vi) a blocking mechanism operationally coupled to the plate members, wherein the blocking mechanism includes a blocking pawl, a handle attached to the blocking pawl, a support surface interconnecting the plate members, and a spring mounted on the support surface, ~~wherein the spring braces~~ bracing the blocking pawl into blocking engagement with the ratchet wheel, the handle of the blocking pawl configured to enable a user to transfer the blocking pawl into an inoperative position to enable passage of one directionally oriented notch of the ratchet wheel, the control cam of the pivot lever configured to transfer the blocking mechanism from an operative position to an inoperative position to enable passage of multiple directionally oriented notches;

vii) a first and second anchoring line attachment ~~means~~ members interconnecting the parallel plate members at remote ends of the device, wherein the anchor line may be ~~removable~~ removably attached to either anchoring line attachment means; and

viii) a first and second guide means serving to aid in winding the threadable line.

35. (Currently Amended) ~~A~~ The bi-directional tensioning device as described in ~~claim 33~~ claim 34, wherein the blocking pawl is of slider-like construction.

36. (Currently Amended) The bi-directional tensioning device as described in ~~claim 33~~ claim 34, wherein the first guide means interconnects the two parallel plates and is spaced next to the

support surface of the blocking mechanism and guides the threadable line over the blocking mechanism.

37. (Currently Amended) The bi-directional tensioning device as described in ~~claim 33~~ claim 34, wherein the second guide means includes a support surface interconnecting the parallel plate members and is spaced between the second anchoring line attachment means and the rotatable drive element.

38. (Currently Amended) A ~~The~~ bi-directional tensioning device as described in ~~claim 33~~ claim 34, wherein the first guide means includes a gradient support surface.

39. (Currently Amended) A ~~The~~ bi-directional tensioning device as described in ~~claim 33~~ claim 34, wherein the first guide means includes a bolt.

40. (Currently Amended) A ~~The~~ bi-directional tensioning device as described in ~~claim 33~~ claim 34, wherein the drive pawl has been lengthened in order to accommodate winding a greater length of the threadable line.

41. (Currently Amended) A ~~The~~ bi-directional tensioning device as described in ~~claim 33~~ claim 34, wherein the cam of each directionally oriented notch on the ratchet wheel is remote from the first anchoring line attachment means.

42. (Currently Amended) A ~~The~~ bi-directional tensioning device as described in ~~claim 33~~ claim 34, wherein the drive part includes a control cam serving to transfer the blocking mechanism associated with the ratchet wheel into an inoperative position.